

When the working personnel in a retail store is divided so that it becomes clear to the worker, to the supervisor and to the public that sales are always made by white people and that menial work is always done by Negroes, there becomes fixed in the minds of all that it is right and proper for people always to be divided into racial classifications. There grows the impression that some people are disqualified from doing certain types of jobs simply because of the factor of race or ancestry. It stereotypes the group. It causes the public to become blind to individual qualities and capacities. It results in the frequently heard expression "all Negroes look the same to me." It perpetuates the myth that Negroes are all the same as a class and that they must be permanently relegated to a special inferior role in our society. It also perpetuates the feeling in the minority group that the majority dictates all social and economic relationships to its own advantage, that America is not really democratic and that America doesn't mean what it says in its history and civic books about democratic rights and privileges.

When employees in a store are assigned jobs on the basis of their qualification without respect to race or ancestry this stereotype is broken. The employees begin to recognize that it is individual merit that counts, not identification of the group. The public begins to recognize that all people are individuals, that each individual has a personality, that some people are particularly good salesmen, that some are poor, that some have good manners and some are not so well mannered. It breaks the stereotype. It causes people to stop thinking of Negroes or members of any other minority as all looking alike and acting alike.

These principles are applicable to any station in life, not merely with respect to retail establishments. They are reviewed here with respect to retail organizations because it is that field which is being considered at this moment. Retail establishments do hold a peculiar place in our society. Retail stores are one of the most significant points in the community where informal public contacts are made on a large scale. Employment practices in industry have great meaning with reference to those who are employed. Employment practices in retailing are significant not only to those who are employed but to the general public. Because of the reasons indicated above it is clear that retail stores must be included in the general drive and that even more good can be accomplished in that field than in many others.